

THREE COUNT®

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Steiners (1)	Steiners	Hase-Nogami	Hase-Nogami (2)
Perez-Boricua			Headhunters
Williams-Gordy (4)	Williams-Gordy	Freebirds	Silver Kings (5)
The O'Deas			Freebirds
Benoit-Wellington (8)		Rhodes-Windham	Anderson-Eaton (3)
Pillman-Lyger	Pillman-Lyger		Rhodes-Windham
The Malenkos (7)		Rude-Austin	Rude-Austin (6)
Koloff-Steamboat	Koloff-Steamboat		Zenk-Bagwell

NWA Tourney Ends at Bash

By ALEX MARVEZ
Three Count Editor

The Bill Watts era will truly begin in World Championship Wrestling upon the completion of the group's latest pay-per-view show July 12 -- The Great American Bash. Watts never liked the idea of a National Wrestling Alliance tournament, and tried to have it cancelled upon assuming the role of WCW's vice president of wrestling May 11. However, the show's line-up was already etched in stone and Watts was forced to hold the tournament to appease other executives in the TBS machine.

Of course, Watts has put his earmark on the bracketing. He eliminated the top-seeded Steiners in a match against Steve Williams and Terry Gordy June 16 on the Clash of Champions. The move was done to get Williams and Gordy over, but largely eliminated any interest in the remainder of the tournament because WCW's most popular team was eliminated. The other change was a victory by The Freebirds over The Silver Kings. This was largely done as a "swerve" toward people knowing WCW's angles ahead of time. Unfortunately, this made what could have been a dream match (Hiroshi Hase-Akira Nogami vs. The Kings) into a nightmare for any wrestling purists. The tournament was also done to scout new talent, but it doesn't seem Watts is interested in bringing any of the new performers into WCW. America's loss.

Here is the official *Three Count* handicapping of
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Briefly

- Two titles changed hands July 5 at the World Championship Wrestling show in Atlanta's Omni. Steve Williams and Terry Gordy defeated Rick-Scott Steiner to win the WCW tag-team titles. The match ended with a Gordy pin on Scott Steiner, although no other details were available at press time. The other title change saw Brad Armstrong capture the WCW junior heavyweight title from Scotty Flamingo in a match described as technically sound but awfully boring. The Armstrong title change almost didn't come about, as word of the switch had leaked to various wrestling insiders weeks earlier.

It is interesting to note that this is probably the hardest pushed Omni house show in WCW history, yet only 2,200 fans paid for tickets totalling a \$25,000 gate. Little mention was made of the Great American Bash pay-per-view show scheduled for July 12 on telecasts. There is speculation that Bill Watts is pushing the Omni shows hard is to please Bob Dhue, one of Watts' few supervisors. Dhue used to be the manager of the Omni and still has strong ties to the building.

- Curtis Hughes turned into a full-fledged babyface July 6 at a WCW television taping in Atlanta's Center Stage, saving The Junkyard Dog from a double-team by Vinnie Vegas and Dallas Page. Jushin Lyger also wrestled on the show, winning one match and wrestling Armstrong to a draw in another. Yes, I'm not kidding. These matches were taped for

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Tourney Mispromoted

(Continued from Page 1)

of the Bash (complete with my own Sting-Big Van Vader angle):

1) **Jushin Lyger-Brian Pillman vs. Ricky Steamboat-Nikita Koloff**: If you thought watching Koloff wrestle **Dean Malenko** was awkward (and awful), wait until Lyger entertains Nikita. On the other hand, I can't wait to see Steamboat and Lyger get together. Because only seven matches are scheduled on the show, this bout should have time to develop, and should be very good. I just can't see Lyger and Pillman winning, and in a way, I rather they wouldn't, because I feel they would be made fodder for Williams and Gordy in the semi-finals. **Winner**: Steamboat pins Pillman with some sort of roll-up for the victory. Everyone shakes hands afterwards as well.

2) **Hase-Nogami vs. Freebirds**: As we mentioned earlier, this is a tremendous waste of one of Japan's best workers (Hase) and a mid-level Japanese worker whose better than most Americans (Nogami). However, I do see the Japanese winning, as The 'Birds' tenure in WCW seems to be flying south. **Winner**: Hase pins **Jimmy Garvin** with a Northern Lights suplex after some attempted double-team moves (ya' never know with The 'Birds).

3) **Dustin Rhodes-Barry Windham vs. Rick Rude-Steve Austin**: Technically, this could be a match of the year candidate. Unfortunately, the build-up for this match does not qualify it as a deserving candidate. Still, Rhodes and Windham could be an effective team down the road if given a catchy moniker and a good program. **Winners**: Rhodes bulldogs Austin for the victory.

4) **Williams-Gordy vs. Koloff-Steamboat**: I'm not quite sure what type of chemistry Steamboat will have with these two, although Steamboat sells better than just about anybody in the business. Expect for him to do a lot of that here, with the heels dominating throughout the match. I don't think Nikita's spots will work too well here. **Winners**: Williams pins Koloff with a stampede after an illegal Wil-

THREE COUNT®

Alex Marvez. Editor/Publisher
Paul Hanlin Jr. Columnist
Carlos Rey. Lucha Libre
John Muse. Japan

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Sheet Spotlight

Here's a look at the top stories of some of the other wrestling newsletters, with subscription information:

• **Dave Meltzer's Wrestling Observer Newsletter** (June 29): Very well-done analysis of the declining television ratings and live show attendance of the WWF and WCW, with charts to boot; Analysis of Beach Blast PPV and Clash of Champions; Smokey Mountain analysis, and the beginning of the *Observer's* "Question of the Week." *Weekly*; \$1.50 an issue. P.O. Box 1228, Campbell CA 95009-1228.

• **Wade Keller's Pro Wrestling Torch** (June 25): Analysis of both the Clash of Champions and Beach Blast shows; **Eric Krol** column on independent promotions; Word from Jesse Barr in Portland. *Weekly*; \$1.25 an issue (Free sample available). P.O. Box 201844, Minneapolis MN 55420.

• **Ron Lemieux's Arena Report** (June 29): Live report from June 19 IWF house show in Winter Haven; Columns by **Mike Terry**, **Scott Hudson**, **Evan Ginzburg** and **Marianne Ryan**. *Bi-weekly*; \$1 an issue. P.O. Box 952547, Lake Mary, FL 32795-2547.

• **Dave Prazak's Outside Interference** (June 8): Debut issue, and a very well-done one at that; Well-written columns by Prazak, **Bill Strong** and **Wade Ratliff**; Capsules of news from around the wrestling world. (June 23): Analysis of Beach Blast and the Clash of Champions; Good column by **Anthony Scala** on **The Ultimate Warrior** and great column by Ratliff on bickering between wrestling's insider fans; **Bobby Yates'** continuing journal of when he went to Japan; A very column-oriented sheet that makes for good reading. *Bi-weekly*; \$1.50 an issue. 2278 Hidden Creek Court, Lisle, IL 60532-1168.

• **Georgiann Makropoulos' Wrestling Chatterbox** (May 1992): Xeroxes of articles concerning **Harley Race's** trial in Kansas City, **Hulk Hogan's** battle over a historic Belleair house, **Steve Planamenta's** hilarious comments to *Charleston Post-Courier* wrestling columnist **Mike Mooneyham**, a bungee jumping business opened by **The Bushwhackers** and old copies of my column in *The Miami Herald*; A new computer program makes this newsletter even easier to read than before. *Monthly*; \$2.50 an issue. 23-44 30th Drive, Astoria, NY 11102.

• **Jeffrey Cohen's Fantasy Federation** (June-July 1992): Descriptions of fantasy matches pitting **Shawn Michaels** vs. **Jushin Lyger**, **Stan Lane** vs. **Bobby Eaton**, **British Bulldogs** vs. **Rick-Scott Steiner**, **Andre the Giant** vs. **The Undertaker**, **Cactus Jack** vs. **Bobo Brazil** (???), **Brian Pillman** vs. **Randy Savage**, **Captain Lou Albano** vs. **Dusty Rhodes** and **Hogan** vs. **Big Van Vader**. Also, well-written editorial comments by Cohen. *Bi-monthly*; \$1 an issue. 50 Shelley Lane, Great Neck, NY 11023.

liams-Gordy double-team move

5) **Hase-Nogami vs. Rhodes-Windham**: This match-up is very intriguing. I don't remember Windham performing too well against Japanese talent in his last Japan tour, but that was just after his **Widowmaker** gimmick in the WWF. Rhodes has toured for All Japan Pro Wrestling as well, but was just learning the ropes at that

time. Still, I think Hase and Nogami could have a three-star match with a bowl of soup. **Winners:** Windham pins Nogami with a lariat in an excellent match.

6) Sting vs. Vader: I love the hype for this match, detailing Sting's return from a "life-threatening" injury at the hands of Vader. It was so life threatening that Sting did an interview the following week brushing off his cracked rib, and wrestled on the SuperBrawl pay-per-view show and all house shows from that point on. This is one reason the buy-rate for this show will likely be the lowest in WCW history. WCW has Vader, though, is over to the casual fan. Both these wrestlers have recently been in the spotlight. Vader sustained a knee injury in late May in Tokyo, and has had mobility problems since. Most wrestling experts consider Sting a lame-duck champion, with an interim heel defeating Sting for the strap until losing it to Ron Simmons. Will that change happen on this pay-per-view? I have a hunch it will, even though logic tells me differently.

How about this for an angle: About 17 minutes into the bout, Sting climbs to the top rope to attempt a body press. The referee frantically attempts to order Sting off the ropes. After about a minute of posturing, Sting steps down to the second rope, but when the referee turns to check on Vader, Sting climbs back to the top. Sting jumps as both Vader and the referee turn around, but is caught by Vader in a power slam (the same move that cracked Sting's rib April 12 at the Omni). Vader has Sting pinned, but the referee calls for the bell and disqualifies the Stinger, who is then carted off on a stretcher selling his ribs. On television the next week, Watts says Sting has sustained severely bruised ribs, but will make all his appearances. A videotape of the Stinger at home is shown, with Sting complaining about how not being able to jump off the top rope severely affects his style. Interspersed in the interview are clips of Sting using the top-rope body press to defeat opponents now in the WWF (Lex Luger at Super Brawl '92 and The Black Scorpion (Ric Flair) at Starrcade '90). Sting says he knows he could have defeated Vader had he only been allowed to complete his jump on time. The interview ends, and Watts begins to talk about why the ban on top rope moves was implemented, but how he remembers Sting's high-flying style from when he was a rookie in the UWF. As Watts begins to show hesitation about enforcing the rule, out comes Van Vader, who says Sting's claim is malarkey and how he wishes Sting could jump off the top rope so he could crush him. Watts loses his temper and agrees that on the September 2 Clash of Champions, a rematch will be held with the top rope rule banned. The winner of that match will face the U.S. title holder, because that is always WCW's No. 1 contender, at Halloween Havoc.

To take it one step further, Vader begins splashing opponents from the top rope in all his squash matches,

losing them all by disqualification. After every match, the jobber is carted away on a stretcher. Vader should also flatten a mid-card babyface (with stretcher job as well) the week before the Clash. A hospital interview could be held with an articulate jobber whose ribs were crushed and career is threatened because Vader performed the move. A medical diagram could even be introduced showing just what Vader's top-rope leap does. Vader begins getting fined for the move, but manager Harley Race gladly pays the fine, greatly disturbing Watts. During these weeks, Sting should be shown training with Windham to get his ribs in shape. Training videos should be held each week, with announcer Jim Ross showing up during the final one. Ross asks Windham why the special interest in the Stinger's training, and Windham says he wants Sting to be "ready" at the Clash.

Finally, the match. Sting (accompanied by Windham, to keep Race in check) and Vader go about 15 minutes, at which point Sting misses the Stinger splash into the turnbuckle. Vader power bombs Sting and slowly climbs to the top rope. He misses a splash, and Sting groggily climbs to the top rope for his coup de grace. Just as he's about to jump, Windham climbs to the ring apron and pushes him off the ropes. Vader pins Sting and wins the title on national television. As the show goes off the air, Ross says commentator Jesse Ventura has gone backstage to find out more information, and fans should tune into the Saturday night TBS show for more details.

Ross introduces the show, and says Jesse was supposed to meet him for the introduction, but word was given "The Body" would be there later in the show. With only four minutes left in the telecast, Ventura is shown pulling into the studio parking lot on a Harley Davidson with a big grin on his face. Ventura strolls in and says he has the scoop of 1992, and hands Ross a videotape, which is quickly turned over to the production crew. After a few seconds of banter, the tape rolls and shows Windham receiving a bunch of money from Race in the dressing room and sharing a laugh with the "new champion." Sting emerges the next week asking for a no disqualification match with Windham at Havoc. Vader will meet Steamboat, who will have defeated Rude for the title at that time, and the buy rate would improve...

I could continue, but back to reality. **Winner at the Bash:** Sting defeats Vader with a small package.

7) Williams-Gordy vs. Rhodes-Windham: This should be another excellent match, but everyone knows who's going to win. I'm certain Rhodes will get pinned. If he doesn't, then we should have a good idea of Dusty Rhodes' tenure in the company. **Winner:** Gordy pins Rhodes with a power bomb. I'm sure the Steiners will appear at some point on this show, maybe after Williams and Gordy win.

Not-so-Sharpe Debut for WWA

Egad! This column is already taking the shape I want it to, which is a combination of Florida news and my own commentary on the wrestling business. So let's begin with some news from down south:

• **World Wrestling Alliance:** Larry Sharpe's group debuted in Tampa June 27 on WTTA-TV (Channel 38). I was told the production values make Mario Savoldi's IWCCW look like the WWF. After an excellent opening graphic, matches were shown of various WWA

Alex Marvez



talent, like Chris Candito and Jungle Jim McPherson. Even Larry Sharpe's retirement match was shown, which I'm sure meant a lot to the Florida viewers considering 99 percent don't know who he is. Sharpe also talked about some of the wrestlers he has trained who have moved onto national prominence, like Bam Bam Bigelow and Papa Shongo. One positive aspect for Sharpe is the fact he was able to sell advertising, something James Manley's International Championship Wrestling was unable to do in the same time slot on the same station (thus, they never appeared on WTTA). They also heavily promoted the fact they are licensed to promote charitable events, which may help them gain the edge among the numerous independent promotions in Tampa. One ominous sign, though, came three weeks ago when no students showed up for a free training session at Sharpe's gym.

• **Suncoast Pro Wrestling:** This group, promoted by Henry Raines, has shows planned at the Manatee County Civic Center in Bradenton on July 31 and either September 19 or October 10. Debbie Malenko will be back for the July card, but her opponent is yet to be named. Penelope Paradise, Suncoast's top heel and performer, and one of the best all-around female workers in the business, has a kidney ailment and will be out of action anywhere from one-to-three months. There is a chance Wendi Richter may face Malenko on the July show, which would be a real interesting and exciting match-up. Also on the show, Raul Mata and Rico Federico have a rematch from their outstanding match on the May 16 Bradenton show and Dean Malenko defends the group's Southern title against a yet-to-be-named opponent ... Suncoast has a July 19 fund-raising show in Zephyrhills, which is near Tampa ... "Three Count" segments on Suncoast and my announcing debut

from the April TV taping should air in September.

• **ICWA:** This group had another television shoot three weeks ago at the Sportatorium in Tampa, but is yet to clear its show in any markets. The big feuds pushed were between Jimmy Backlund and Mark Starr, and a three-way conflict between The Terminators, Star Riders and Southern Posse. Backlund, who is the babyface in the feud, has adapted a new Japanese-style gimmick. Also on the show, Brickhouse Brown defeated El Tigre ... Now that Eddy Mansfield's International Wrestling Federation has stopped running shows in Tampa on Saturday nights, this group has dropped its Saturday Sportatorium shows.

World Championship Wrestling: This group has four dates scheduled in September -- Sept. 23 in Panama City, Sept. 24 in Tallahassee, Sept. 25 in St. Petersburg and Sept. 26 in Jacksonville. Line-ups for these shows are yet to be determined. The same can be said about WCW's August swing through Florida (Sarasota, Fort Myers and Jacksonville from the 13th through the 15th), although the information will be in next week's issue.

...

I have an awful feeling that Vince Russo may end up as the No. 1 voice of the New York wrestling radio world very soon, and that's not because I hate Russo (I don't). It's because there may be no one left to challenge him by the end of summer.

The market's top show, the Rich Mancuso-Jody MacDonald collaboration on WFAN-AM, ends July 18 (see *Briefly* for more details). And John Arezzi's Pro Wrestling Spotlight on WEVD-AM is being broadcast on an erratic basis because of financial difficulties. Russo is currently on WGBB-AM in Babylon, NY, a low-powered station that Arezzi used to be on. Arezzi has an exclusive contract with the 50,000 watt WGBB, but how long can the station continue to support Arezzi when Russo, the owner of two video stores, can offer a steady weekly income? Not to mention World Wrestling Federation performers. On his June 19 telecast, Russo had an extremely successful show and live event with WWF performers prior to the group's card at the Nassau Coliseum in Long Island. And don't believe for a second the WWF wouldn't give Russo carte blanche on talent for his show if they know it would hurt Arezzi. Russo's show is insulting to any smart fans intelligence, and he panders constantly to the WWF, but he may be the only thing on if Arezzi or someone else can't find a way to get on the air.

Briefly

(Continued from Page 1)

WCW's Pro Wrestling syndicated telecasts. When Watts cancelled scheduled television tapings prior to the group's June 20 Beach Blast pay-per-view show, the Pro show was left without its scheduled number of fresh matches. So, the Pro show aired the weekend of July 4 consisted entirely of repeated matches.

- If you think that Lyger result is crazy, listen to this one. Lyger lost to Flamingo July 4 on a WCW show in Baltimore.

- And if you think Lyger has it bad, feel sorry for WCW's event coordinators. Watts has cut their salary by 20 percent.

- In one of the most shocking moves of the year, the World Wrestling Federation has re-signed **Bob Backlund**, the group's former champion who had a bitter break-up with the group once it began to expand nationally in 1984. Sources close to the WWF say Backlund was told by promotion owner **Vince McMahon** that he would be the character the promotion would be built around to "bring the families back." Backlund worked WWF shows from July 1 through the July 4th weekend.

- Hot rumor has **El Gigante** heading to the WWF through a deal arranged by WCW referee **Bill Alfonso**, who travels with Gigante in an interpreter/valet type role. Gigante was given an indefinite leave of absence by former WCW executive vice president **Kip Frey** last April after the death of his mother and an illness to his father caused Gigante to return to Argentina.

- The **Rich Mancuso-Jody MacDonald** wrestling radio show on WFAN-AM (660) in New York will be telecast for the final time July 18. The show, which was never popular with the WFAN management, is ending because MacDonald is quitting his position at WFAN to concentrate on his mid-day sports talk-show job on Philadelphia's WIP-AM (610).

- Sad to report the death of former wrestler **Stan Fraser** to kidney failure. Fraser wrestled as **Uncle Elmer** in the WWF in the mid-1980s and as **Plowboy Fraser** in Memphis.

- In light of Watts being so concerned about kay fabing WCW storylines, here's a funny story about the group's June 29 television taping at Center Stage. The weekend prior to the show, WCW's management decided to drop the group's U.S. tag-team titles, which were won by **Dick Slater** and **The Barbarian** from **The Freebirds** June 24 in Kansas City, Kan. The announcement of the decision was made at the Center Stage taping. However, because the Slater-Barbarian victory will not air until late July on WCW's syndicated pro-

gramming, the decision could obviously not be implemented immediately. So, the solution -- Slater and Barbarian talk about how they would love to be the next U.S. tag-team champions on the Center Stage tapings. Thus, WCW's angles stay intact on television, but expose the business to fans in Kansas City and those who found out about the title change through the wrestling media.

- Speaking of humor, **Three Count** had a discussion with WWF spokesman **Steve Planamenta** about various matters. He chronicled **Lex Luger's** injuries from a motorcycle accident, yet did not have any dates available of when the injury, how it happened, etc. Planamenta was also at a loss about how to explain why **The British Bulldog's** six-week suspension was cut short so he could appear on a WWF television taping in late May. "I don't know," Planamenta said tersely. "I don't deal with the talent decisions."

Planamenta, the group's appointed spokesman, said the group sold out its August 27 Summer Slam show (telecast via pay-per-view in the U.S. two days later) for England's 80,000-seat Wembley Stadium in 10 hours. Planamenta, though, said he did not understand why chronicled claims that anywhere between 20,000-35,000 tickets were available have been printed. Planamenta said maybe the reason agencies like TicketMaster say there are so many seats left is because the promotion sells seats on consignments. "For example," Planamenta said, "Let's say you were the Alex Bus Company. And you purchased 1,000 tickets from us on consignment. It is your responsibility to sell those tickets." When told that still didn't explain why TicketMaster was still offering seats, Planamenta did not have an answer.

- **Three Counts** still attempting to reach **Eddie Gilbert** in reference to his recent separation/divorce from **Debra "Madusa" Micelli**. Gilbert has returned phone calls, but has not been reached at his Tennessee home.

- In what could be one of the major stories of 1992 (if there aren't enough already), the WWF is reportedly cancelling all U.S. house shows for September and running shows solely in Europe. Planamenta, reached one day after **Three Count's** initial phone call, did not return a contact call immediately asking for confirmation.

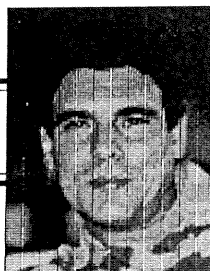
- **Murray Hodgson**, the former WWF announcer who is suing the group for wrongful termination of contract, is no longer retaining Connecticut-based **Ed Nusbaum** as an attorney. Hodgson said the two had split over litigation proceedings in Hodgson's suit, and he is now considering three other attorneys. Hodgson gave his sworn deposition concerning his suit June 26 at the WWF offices in Stamford, Conn.

Calo-Winners Bolster AAA Shows

Before previewing the AAA shows telecast on Galavision June 21 and 28, I would like to inform you EMLL fans that you don't have to miss out on that group just because they are no longer telecast in the U.S. Dave Scherer, a good friend of mine, gets the EMLL shows on satellite each week and is willing to supply anyone interested in obtaining them. Write to Dave at P.O. Box 612, Mamora, N.J., 08223.

Now, onto the AAA show
June 21:

Carlos Rey



1) The tecnico team of Super Kiss-Super Calo-Winners were just that -- winners -- in defeating rudos Atila-Bleda-Picudo in two of three falls. This match featured a great ring introduction, with a fantastic dance act put on by a girl who was with Super Calo. I mean, this has to be seen to be appreciated. I've already stated that the team of Winners and Calo are fantastic, but every time I see them, they seem to get even better. This was my first look at Super Kiss, and he wasn't bad, either. This match began with a quick pace (which, with Calo and Winners, you cannot have it any other way), and ended with Kiss pinning El Picudo after a suplex, Calo pinning Bleda and Winner pinning Atila. The second fall began with Bleda doing a move just like Ric Flair does when he's thrown into the turnbuckle and flips onto the ring apron, but Bleda flew outside the ring and landed flat on his back almost onto the fans. What a move! Calo does a lot of shuffling and dancing, which makes him very enjoyable to watch. The fall ended when all three rudos teamed up on Kiss and Calo for one pin, and Winners was left unable to enter the ring by Picudo. The third fall had a few missed moves, which can be expected from wrestlers that are so young. That is not to say that Winners and Calo won't be big stars, because I think they will be. But, a missed spot with Picudo (who should also achieve stardom, with a style that resembles Pierroth Jr's) illustrates my point. Winners jumped on the top turnbuckle and did a backwards flip (a *mortalasia atras* which is the same move Chavo Guerrero used to execute in the UWF). Picudo was supposed to catch him, but was out of position. One of Winners' thighs hit Picudo's shoulder, injuring Winners. Kiss immediately stepped in for the pin on Picudo, ending the match because he was the rudo team captain. Kiss was very quick to pick up on the injury, so it didn't look that bad.

However, you know the injury was a shoot because referee Pepe Casas (who trains these guys) immediately began helping Winners try to get rid of what looked like a nasty charlie horse. Winners quickly limping to the dressing room limping.

2) The tecnico team of Apollo-Superstar-Galactico defeated Brazo de Platino-Super Brazo-La Rosa (rudos) in two falls. Before this bout started, I knew it would be good because of the Brazo brothers, but little did I expect La Rosa (translated in English as The Rose) to be the hit of the match. Rosa, who uses an effeminate gimmick) came to ringside and tried to give a rose to two young men sitting in the front row. You should have seen the expression on their faces when Rosa tried this. After they wouldn't accept the flower, he went to another Oriental man who did. Rosa's gimmick was also great in the ring. This match also began well with Super Brazo, who weighs about 265-275 pounds, moving just like his brother, El Brazo de Plata. Platino is a large man, but is not nearly as fat as Super Brazo and has better agility. Superstar pinned Platino with a backward flip off the top rope, Apollo pinned Rosa after a top-rope dropkick and Super Brazo did not answer the count after Galactico splashed him outside the ring. The rudo comeback in the second fall was short-lived, as the fall ended after five wrestlers had done dives to outside the ring (although Rosa's leap was more similar to a butt drop). Rosa, the team captain, was pinned by Galactico with a *tuque de espaldas en puente* (belly-to-back suplex with a bridge).

3) A rare draw in lucha-style wrestling between Angel Azteca-Kendo Starr-Solar (tecnicos) and Tony Arce-Vulcano-Roco Valente (Los Destructores, one of the best rudo six-man teams in lucha). The Destructores are being pushed as the No. 2 heel trio in AAA behind Los Hermanos Dinamita (Cien Caras-Mascara Año 2000-Universo 2000). In the first fall, Kendo, who was making his television debut in AAA, began having problems with heel referee El Tirantes. But this didn't slow him down too much and he looked pretty good. Azteca made Valente submit, Kendo pinned Vulcano and Solar made Arce submit. The second fall was dominated by the rudos and their brawling tactics. Valente pinned Azteca,

*Carlos Rey has watched lucha libre for more than 10 years and cannot get enough of the style. He not only writes a weekly column for **Three Count**, but, in addition, has tapes of Galavision shows available. Write to him at 996 West 45th Place, Hialeah FL 33012 for more information. He is hoping to begin receiving tapes of the UWA soon. Look for more details and a review here.*

all three rudos forced Solar to submit and Kendo was thrown from the ring. The third fall saw Kendo and Solar take an incredible beating until Azteca helped begin the tecnico comeback. Kendo pinned Vulcano, but at the same time, Valente pinned Kendo, so the match was announced as a draw and a rematch was scheduled for the following week.

4) Another inconclusive finish between technicos **Perro Aguayo-Octagon-Hijo del Santo** vs. rudos **Fishman-La Parca-Blue Panther**. This was a total brawl, especially between Aguayo and Fishman. But in the first fall, there were still some good technical moves executed. Parca was especially outstanding, and looks better each time I see him. Santo also looked great, performing some fantastic moves on Panther andlobbering Fishman and Parca over the head with a chair, leaving them unable to answer the bell. The second fall was wild, with Fishman bashing Aguayo with a chair and pouring a fan's beer onto Santo. Fishman and Panther made Santo submit, Parca made Octagon submit and Aguayo was left unable to return to the ring. The third fall, to put it mildly, was even wilder. Santo did a fantastic leap onto Panther outside the ring. This ended up with Fishman unmasking Octagon and Aguayo sneaking up on Fishman and unmasking him, with both moves an automatic disqualification. The double DQ causes the match to end in a draw, with a rematch the following week. By the way, there were banners visible in the background made by the rudo fans to cheer them on. On what other wrestling show would that be done?

Onto June 28:

1) Winners-Calo-Kiss defeated **Dr. Maldad-Mr. Maldad-La Momia Karis** in two of three falls. Two things about this match were disappointing from the onset -- Calo did not have his entranced dancer routine and Karis was in the match. Still, at least Calo and Winners were wrestling. The first fall wasn't as fast-paced as the usual matches involving the technicos, because the rudos were not very agile. Winners pinned Dr. Maldad, Kiss pinned Mr. Maldad and Calo rendered Karis unable to enter the ring. The second fall saw the rudos comeback, with Karis pinning Calo, Mr. Maldad pinning Kiss and Dr. Maldad pinning Winners after a splash off the top rope. The rudos also appeared to be heading for a third-fall victory, which wouldn't be surprising considering the size difference between the two teams. However, the technicos were able to render the rudos outside the ring and unable to answer the count for the victory.

2) The tecnico team of **Katana-Galactico-Superstar** defeated **Ice Killer-Maligno-Tornado** (rudos) by disqualification in three falls. Galactico seems to be getting a bigger push than his teammates. Katana (**Leon Chon**) debuted and looked good in a costume resembling what **Electro** used to wear from Marvel Comics fame. This match began slowly but picked up with

Superstar pinning Killer and Katana making Tornado submit. The rudos came back with Tornado making Katana submit, Killer pinning Superstar and Maligno rendering Galactico unable to answer the count outside the ring. The third fall was also good. As Superstar dragged Killer around the arena floor by his neck, a fan threw beer at Killer. The rudo almost lived up to his name against the fan. All three rudos would not stop kicking the life out of Galactico, prompting Casas to call for the disqualification.

3) One of two rematches from last week's show saw **Arce-Valente-Vulcano** defeat **Kendo-Solar-Azteca** in two of three falls. The heels won a heated first fall when Valente pinned Azteca with the help of the other two rudos, Kendo was pinned with a triple team and Solar was forced to submit. The technicos eeked out a victory in the second fall, with Kendo pinning Valente with *la rana* (a roll-up sometimes used as a finisher), Azteca pinned Arce with *la rana* and Vulcano submitted to Solar. The rudos took the third fall, and were helped a bit by Tirantes. All three rudos pinned Solar and the other technicos were unable to answer the count.

4) This was another rematch from last week, and the most anticipated bout of the evening, with **Aguayo-Santo-Octagon** facing **Fishman-Parca-Panther**. This was a great main event and an all-out war. The first outstanding aspect was Parca grabbing Aguayo's hat and hitting everyone with it, which was humiliating for Aguayo. Every time the faces were making a comeback, Tirantes would stop them. The heels took the fall when Fishman pinned Aguayo (the team captain) with a splash off the top rope. With some outstanding moves, Santo and Octagon were able to get things going the technicos way in the second fall. Santo came off the top rope with an elbow onto Fishman, followed by Aguayo stomping Fishman's chest. Octagon followed this with a leg drop, and the other technicos held Octagon on top of Fishman for the pin. The third fall was brutal, with Fishman's mask just about ripped off by Aguayo. Aguayo pinned Parca, and Fishman pinned Octagon. While Octagon was getting pinned, Tirantes prevented Santo from making the save. Aguayo did *un lance* (dive through the middle ropes outside the ring) onto Panther and Fishman did one to Santo, leaving Fishman and Aguayo as the final two men in the ring. At this point, Tirantes held onto Aguayo, causing the tecnico to turn around and punch him, causing a disqualification. Fishman and Aguayo kept brawling, and were just about on top of the ringside fans. When the two were finally separated, Fishman's mask was just about destroyed, revealing an ugly, half-balding wrestler. Octagon also took a shot at Tirantes during the post-match melee. Casas, the other referee, declared the bout in the technicos' favor, so we had another ~~empate~~ (draw). All in all, an OK show with a great main event.

Spotlight on: Steve Beverly

With television ratings for both the World Wrestling Federation and World Championship Wrestling at an all-time low, who better to ask for an analysis of the situation than Steve Beverly? The former Matwatch editor is the wrestling industry's leader in analyzing television products and trends. It's also good to check up on a good friend to many of us who decided last January to discontinue publishing his wrestling newsletter -- the second-largest in the world of its kind behind the Wrestling Observer Newsletter -- what he has done with his spare time. In this first part of a two-part interview, Beverly addresses the television product of both major groups and discusses claims by Vince Russo that Russo knew nothing about the sale of Steve's Matwatch mailing list to the former Pro Wrestling Spotlight partnership with Russo and John Arezzi.

AM: I guess we should start this interview with the same question we asked last time. What have you been up to since the closing of *Matwatch*?

SB: Things have been much more relaxed in a lot of ways. I've been able to find more time to do the things I want to do when I gave *Matwatch* up. I'm a lot more selective in the amount and the product of wrestling I watch on television. I've found out there's a life out there I was missing. I miss a lot of the friendships I had with people in the business. I'm not in contact with them as frequently as before, but that's to be expected when you're not in the forefront week after week. I do not miss the deadlines one iota. It's probably the old man in me talking, but I honestly feel no regret about the move. It's allowed me to regain my weekends and focus on some things that, frankly, are much more important in life.

AM: Are you working on anything wrestling related?

SB: I don't want to talk specifically about it, because someone may steal the idea. I'm not working on something weekly, bi-weekly or even quarterly, but on a long-form project that will be the length of an annual. I think it will be good, and I can say it will focus on television wrestling. I hope that it is going to be completed in the fall, hopefully for some kind of distribution a little before Christmas time. It will be somewhere between 80-100 pages that people who follow wrestling on TV, especially for the last 15 years, will enjoy. I haven't died, but this is something I really wanted to do and never had the time to do. It's been fun trying to put it together, but I can't offer specifics yet.

AM: I wanted to touch base on one other newsletter-related situation. Can you please comment on Vince Russo's comments concerning you in a recent *Three Count* interview?

SB: After this whole mess came out, I decided to back off and not get into the personal differences between the two of them (Russo and John Arezzi). I resent, whether he was aware John purchased my mailing list or not, that he used it. Enough former subscribers told me he had used the list to send sample issues to them and they didn't want them. I tried to make contact with him. He didn't return the calls or receive any of my messages, I guess. If Arezzi didn't tell Vince about the list, the only thing I have to say is a business man can leave himself open to extra-ordinary problems if he doesn't know what's going on with his company. He would have to be the most naive person in the world to think they got the mailing list for free, and I don't buy that. But as far as I'm concerned, it's a dead issue. I'm not going to offer the list for sale anymore. It has soured me on an aspect of the whole business. There are too many dealings with this sort of thing where people are not up front with each other and the situation explodes into something much worse than it should. In the interview, I wanted to get out the

violins when he said I showed no respect toward him. The comment in itself doesn't need answering.

AM: Since television is your specialty, I wanted to ask your opinion about the products being telecast today. Your thoughts on the World Wrestling Federation?

SB: I can't tell you the last time I watched their show, except to glance for 5-10 minutes to check out some of the latest bizarre stuff. When they went heavily into the occult and their voodoo presentation ... I have long thought that a lot of things they have done had crossed the line of good taste, but there is no cohesive reason for this stuff to occur other than the fact they have lost their grip creatively. I'm one who always sided with the family side of entertainment in wrestling -- which is somewhat ambiguous because you can argue that wrestling is inherently not a family form of entertainment -- but frankly, a lot of parents, if they have paid any attention at all to this stuff, have to have had their eyes completely opened or at least cracked. It's not something that is overwhelmingly great for kids at that age to be watching, at least unsupervised.

In all honesty, I said this next statement three or four years ago, but it has taken that long for it to really take shape. I honestly do believe -- and some who have not worked in the TV industry and are strictly wrestling fans will not grasp this -- that when wrestling became a national phenomena in 1984 and angles became homogenized with a national presentation, it took on the shape of being literally a television series in the same fashion as *Cosby*, *MASH*, *Quincy* or *The Rockford Files*. Anything of that genre is going to be finite. There will be a period that people are going to continue to find the shows entertaining, and then that's it. *Cosby*'s ratings dropped markedly in this final season. *The Ed Sullivan Show*, after 23 years, began to limp along in its final two or three seasons. The average life for a television series is six to seven years of those that are classified as hits. There are a lot more failures than that. After a few years, they cease to have, even if there is still a significant following, not a blockbuster following, and the shows begin either repeating storylines or bring on characters that get away from the central focus of the show. Then, it's not as much fun to watch anymore. *MASH* was able to get away with it because it was in a war-time setting, and they were able to bring in new characters who were interesting. *Cosby* was not as interesting in Year 8 as in Year 1, because the family got older. For wrestling, in general, the association is true. As an entertainment form, wrestling has simply declined because of television, the over-exposure and eventual catching up to itself with its characters getting tired and new characters not being as interesting. I don't see a great turning around, either. About the WWF ask specifically, from that standpoint, their the one that shows the

most wear and tear comparatively speaking. The prime focus is not there without **Hulk Hogan**, and I'm not even talking about the damage from the scandals. And a lot of the kids the WWF was built on are older, and wrestling is not as big a deal any more. The attention span of kids doesn't hold up, and Hulk Hogan as a hero then is not a hero now and he's not around. There simply isn't that focus. It's like *Happy Days* without **Fonzie** or *Gunsmoke* without **Matt Dillon**.

AM: In reference to the new characters, I see *L.A. Law* in the same pattern you just described.

SB: When you see all the new characters, many of which haven't worked, they haven't provided the kind of life the core show had to start with. You're starting to see some cracks in *Designing Women* now. They lose **Delta Burke** and bring in two characters. One is OK and the other is a caustic character in **Julia Duffy** that people did not respond to. When you bring in another character, sometimes you can weaken the show to the point it does not have interest. You can draw the same parallel to wrestling. There is simply not much new talent out there. You can argue for territories to come back, but it will never go back to where we were. You can't pluck experienced talent. Instead, you get guys who haven't even had a chance to make a mistake yet. I think both organizations have reached the point on their TV shows where they are settling into just their hard-core following. They don't have the casual fan anymore that watches to the degree like in 1984 and 1988. I think some of them have gone on to *American Gladiators*, which has a lot more interest right now in this era of Crash TV. It's doing double the numbers in syndication than the other two.

AM: What are your thoughts on WCW's product.

SB: Well, again, the wrestling itself certainly isn't bad. It's a product to a hard-core fan. I don't think we've reached the stage yet or even come close to it where we see traditional **Bill Watts** wrestling. It's not there, and I'm not sure what it takes to get there. It has not been a dull product, but the same problems exist in that these are the same characters that have been around for a while. Some of them maybe have come and gone between different organizations. Some are being brought in after their second or third time, or after they've worn out in the WWF. I don't think that talent is the answer. Maybe it's the only talent they can choose from besides Japanese talent from time to time.

I don't see a turn around in arena gates coming and frankly, I don't know how much their Saturday night rating were hurt by the new flagship show of (former WCW executive vice president) **Kip Frey**. I don't think it completely blew out the ratings, but I think the whole industry is in a malaise. We certainly have competent talent by today's standards, even in those of 1988-89. I still think we could draw much better ratings on TV then and probably do better at the gate than they did.

Bill has inherited a situation that I don't know if he can turn it around. WCW has seen so many changes in creative direction, so many focuses, so many people in the forefront of the promotion trying to find a new gimmick or the next star. You can't keep doing that. In the TV news business, if we would have changed anchor people as many times as the WCW organization changed direction since late 1988, people would leave us because we would simply not be able to be consistent.

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-- Steve Beverly

Sometimes you hang with something even if it's not worth following because you like to keep consistency. I like Bill's idea to try and eliminate the gross number of titles they have, because I think he has a point that more titles is not necessarily better. I don't know if any of this means that much to the viewer. I think the industry is at such stage that I don't know if a miracle is out there to turn it around. I like to believe it, but I have the sinking feeling that, in reference to the hard-core fans, what they felt for so many years was the magic answer to turning around pro wrestling -- Bill Watts returning to WCW -- is not

going to happen in 1992 and '93. I hate to sound pessimistic, because I am still at least a fan, but I don't see it happening, because TV is such an enemy to itself. Too many wrestling programs exist for their own good. WCW is in business largely to try and produce programming for cable television, but how long will that continue if things happen like the 2.8 ratings for that Clash particularly with Saturday and Sunday ratings not blockbuster, either. It's getting to the point you can put an average movie in there and get better ratings than wrestling does. Maybe the Saturday night show will be helped when TBS gets rid of the two fishing shows as a lead in. But that's always a convenient excuse. WCW has tended to do better with stronger lead ins, and after August, we'll find out. They intend to put some pretty good action movie titles leading up to wrestling. But looking in the fall, WCW will be facing some pretty good college football competition.

AM: Not to mention college football on PPV.

SB: That's something people are not figuring in the mix. Now that ABC and Showtime are teaming to do pay-per-view college football, some real hard-core wrestling fans may drop it like a hot potato. Bill may never get to the level where people would like to see it at. This is simply an industry that has such a saturation and exposure level that this may be as good as its going to get, with an occasional fluctuation. It's been a long time since a wrestling show has done a 3.0 television rating. That used to be a standard. Now, when you even get to 2.5, it's considered pretty successful by the standards of the current era. I don't see anything in the immediate horizon that's going to improve things. I don't care who's calling the shots.

There will be a point in time where Bill Watts has his people and his team. Then comes the trial by fire. Don't get too excited about a lot of things yet, because I don't think we've really seen an example of Bill Watts' wrestling. If we see it and the public does not buy it because they're not interested ... it could happen. I hope that doesn't happen, because I was more fond of Bill's product when it was at its peak in 1985 than any other product in wrestling. But if he puts in a philosophy and it does not work, it will be because people in 1992 and '93 are not interested. People do change. I don't know if one big, new, compelling character can turn it around. (Former WCW executive vice president) **Jim Herd** used to talk about finding one big mega-star, and everything would turn around. I don't know if the guy is out there, because you don't have any proving ground for them to develop. Think of all the small territories there used to be. The Dothan, Alabamas. The Macon, Georgias. Little towns that Hulk Hogan wrestled in before he became big time. The fact is we don't have them any more.

Next issue: Two things happened since this issue began. The first is word that I have sustained either a severely sprained or fractured right hand, which has forced me to wear a brace and slowed my typing skills considerably. I am unable to write, which is good, because that is what caused the problem in the first place. I injured my hand in a basketball game two months ago, but when swelling subsided enough to make me happy, I ignored any sort of problems with it. Unfortunately, I ended up doing a lot of hand writing within the past few weeks at *The New York Times* and I began feeling a twinge in my hand. It hurts to even button a shirt. I am undergoing an X-ray July 9 in Miami, and will update y'all next week. The only reason I am saying this is because I had to abbreviate this week's issue to 10 pages because my typing speed is so slow. We will be at 12 pages next week with a complete look at the Bash, the conclusion of the Steve Beverly interview (one of my favorites of all-time), and a major surprise at Three Count.

This issue was also mailed July 8, one day later than planned. The problems were work-related and my fault. I was sent to Washington Heights on July 7 to cover the riots, and after seven straight hours of walking and avoiding gangs of street hoodlums and bottles being thrown at police, I was unable to finish my 12-hour day in time to put the finishing touches on the newsletter. Anyway, I will see y'all next week!

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8850 S.W. 19th Street
Miami FL 33165